Mbusa (preparation in the forest). The women who have gone to the forest cut the flexible branches of the trees (mienge). Then they fashion a sort of termite's nest in which they hide a handful of musuku leaves. A pole is passed through the nest ... The pole supporting the termite's nest is carried by two women who sing a song in honor of the fiancée: "Mu luendo lulia lwine batebera Na chisungu chifinga cha nkuni." The children also carry bundles of firewood on their backs, after the nakalamba has first annointed them with the red dye of nkula. Then they all come back singing: "Nshimba mulya ya ngombe." The children take up the chorus: "Ngombe isho we ulele, ngombe isho kufula kocho... ." 881

Mbusa (arrival at the village). After returning to the village, they unload the clay and bundles of wood in the hut. The clay will serve to make the fireplace. In this special fireplace, lit with a fresh fire, the famous highly seasoned dish for the wedding is cooked, the namushinwa, consisting of beans, sorghum (millet), chick-peas, lentils, tubers and peas, vegetable marrow and castor. They sing: "Natukalabe Babisa, baleto ku kalaba." [262]

Mbusa (matrimonial symbols). The women put down the white clayey earth, treading it down with charcoal and the red dye of nkula. They put all of it down near the hearth. [364]

The female director of the ceremony [nachimbusa] then brings in two baskets filled with earthenware mbusa made a long time ago and always used for the same purpose. Please note that the nachimbusa is a sort of priestess whose office is hereditary. It is her job to preside at wedding ceremonies. The mbusa which she uses represent wedding symbols and have various shapes. I was able to purchase some of these mbusa by paying a great deal. Some are shaped like bi-sexual dolls, others are shaped like small vases with spiney walls, yet others resemble flower vases, certain others look like animals, one in the form of a big snail which emits a sound resembling a lion's roar. Once the ceremony [215] is over, the nachimbusa takes home her mbusa. When she dies, they are buried with her in her grave. During her whole life she carefully hides them in termite nests or under rocks in the river-bed. Here are the names of the various mbusa according to their form or use: chiluwe, chimundu, chimingi posa masamba, chilyobe wa ngoma, mwansa 881 773 [323 532] 552 881

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226 423 [501] fishing also, technically speaking, any man can set a net in the smaller rivers, but *de facto* few except the residents are able to do so for want of nets and canoes. Boats are individually owned, and though they may be borrowed, a man who takes a boat and catches fish in it or even kills meat on the opposite side of the river must share his luck with the owner.[1] It is rare to find more than one canoe in a village on a small stream. At the village of the Paramount, where there is much traffic over the Kalungu river, there are only two boats available for crossing and fishing. For this reason the inhabitants of fishing villages in practice have the monopoly of net setting.

226 463 [777] In the specialized fishing villages the situation is changed. Magico-religious ritual becomes more complex and is closely associated with rights of use of the river.[2] When I spent some time on the banks of the Chambesi in the territory of Mwaba and Nkula, and even on the Kalungu near the Paramount's village, I constantly heard men being picked out as being lucky fishers, and the phrase 'an expert on boats' (*aleshibishyo bwato*) means not only a man who knows how to handle canoes, but who is reputed to have powerful fishing magic. Here also definite rites of prayer [791] to the Land Spirits must be performed at the opening of the trapping and the netting seasons, and these are in the hands of economic specialists with magic powers (*icibinda*, plur. *ifibinda*) who are at one and the same time the most knowledgeable fishers, the leaders in co-operative enterprise, and the priests of the local deities.[3] This office is strictly hereditary in the line of the man [793] first given the title by the original chief. I never saw any of the fishing rites of the Chambesi, but often heard them described as big gatherings of all the neighbouring villagers who assembled

[1] Large trees fit for boat-making are rare and must sometimes be fetched from a distance, usually after paying tribute to the chief of the district, nowadays 5*s.* per tree. To hollow out a canoe with an axe-head takes a man about two months, or a team of seven or eight men three weeks. The shaping of the prow head, which is merely pointed and not carved or ornamented in any way is the task of specialists who are paid about 3*s.*, so that the whole process is an expensive one. It is characteristic of the present Bemba economic system that such boats have to be sold for about £1. 10*s.* in spite of the labour taken to make them. Why? 'Because a man in this country would not find more than £1. 10*s.*'

[2] Even the launching of canoes which is done in the smaller rivers without ceremony has its own special ritual on the Chambesi River (*ukusapika bwato*).

[3] Specialist elephant hunters with magic powers are also known as *ifibinda*. The priests of local land deities are known as *shimiapepo*. The headmen of the fishing villages combine both functions.

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bufumu ico mfumu ilelalapo). The whole of this conception must be considered against the background of the people's belief in the supernatural powers of their chiefs, and the influence of his sexual capacities on the fertility of the land.[1]

(*c*) *The purification of the priest.* Since sex intercourse makes it impossible to approach the *imipashi* or to enter their shrines, the ritual purification of the officiating priest and his wife, after the blessing of the axe or seeds, is an essential act in each economic rite. It is one which is performed before every solemn prayer or sacrifice to the *imipashi*, before the founding of a new village, an inheritance ceremony, a death or the birth of twins, &c., either by the chief, the headman, or the commoner, as the case may be. In the case of a commoner or an ordinary headman, this rite of purification (*ukuwamya umubili*) is simple. The morning after the sexual act, the couple set on the fire the woman's marriage pot—a tiny clay pot made for her by her paternal aunt on her marriage—and they heat water in it. This the wife then pours over her husband's hands. Both then bathe in the river and return to the village, after which new fire must be lighted in the hut. Sex taboos are kept by the pair until the ceremony in question is over. In the case of the chief, and particularly the Citimukulu, this rite is, however, exceedingly complex. It involves the simultaneous ritual intercourse of the chief and the 'wife of the land' (*umukolo wa calo*), and the Cimba and the Cikutwe with their respective head wives in huts built specially for the purpose. Afterwards twelve or fifteen of the *bakabilo* must assist, each with his own hereditary part, in the purification ceremony and the lighting of the new fire. Without purifying his body the chief can never enter his *bemye* house or use his powers over the land to the full, but the complication and expense of a rite which requires the simultaneous presence of so many officials is one of the reasons why the full ceremonial of tree-cutting or first-fruits described later is so rarely performed nowadays, when chiefs are impoverished and cannot always command the loyalty of their *bakabilo*.

(*d*) *The divination rite.* Except in the case of first-fruit rites, each ceremony, whether tree-cutting or blessing of seeds, is followed by some act of divination in which the intentions of the *imipashi* are revealed to their descendants. Here the element of individual doubt and uncertainty is apparent again. There are

[1] Cf. p. 449.

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[754] witchcraft, handled by people believed to have supernatural powers.

(ii) *The magic influence of sex, blood and fire* which, when brought
789 into wrongful contact with each other, are thought to be highly
831 dangerous to every Bemba, but particularly to babies and young
372 children, who are believed to be vulnerable to so many dangers; and to chiefs, on whom the prosperity of the land is held to depend. This system of beliefs is extremely complex, and yet it is necessary to try to understand it, if the meaning of the chisungu is to be grasped. The dogma relating sex and fire is the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behaviour of the Bemba.

834 Briefly speaking, sex relations according to Bemba dogma make
784 a couple 'hot'. In this state it is dangerous for them to approach
783 the ancestral spirits in any rite of prayer or sacrifice; and any chief
622 or headman who attempted to perform such a ceremony without purification would run the risk of bringing disaster on his district.
● [793] The chief's shrines are guarded by old women or hereditary priests who keep sex taboos. For the chief to be casual in keeping sex taboos, or to approach his ancestors without purification is 'to spoil the land' (*ukucosaula icalo*).

831 All persons of sex maturity are in fact distinguished by a special
372 term (*wa kuboko*) and are excluded from a number of rites on the
784 ground that they are 'hot', or are likely to be 'hot'. Such people
783 can pollute the fireplace of a hut by touching it, and then a baby
854 fed with gruel cooked on this fire might sicken and die. Parents
846 who do not purify themselves after intercourse run the risk of killing their children by accidentally touching the family hearth. Adulterers are more dangerous still, as they cannot purify themselves since the necessary rite can only be carried out by husband and wife. Small babies and their mothers are therefore kept away from beer drinks where 'bad' people congregate drinking round the fire without care. The baby's gruel is often cooked on a separate hearth and in a separate pot. The art of Bemba motherhood in fact consists very largely in guarding children from danger from fire. A newly born baby is 'unripe' (*mubishi*) and is in a specially precarious position until it has been 'taken' by its parents (*ukupoka umwana*) by an act of intercourse and the lighting of new fire, when it is a few months old. To save the baby, it must be 'brought to the fire' by being held over the flames of a doctored

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daughters or grand-daughters as well as for their own daughters. In fact, it increases the reputation of a man of substance to be able to hold such a ceremony. He is said to 'dance the chisungu' of so-and-so (*ukumucindila icisungu*).

The mistress of the ceremonies (*nacimbusa*).[1] The *nacimbusa* organizes the rites, leads the dances and songs, and arranges for the making of the pottery and other emblems required. She is considered to perform a very important service. It is work that demands a detailed knowledge of ritual, industry in carrying through long and even arduous tasks, organizing ability, tact and personality. A successful *nacimbusa* probably has unusual intellectual ability as well as leadership and the power to attract women from surrounding villages to attend a ceremony and to keep a body of helpers alert and interested for some weeks. The *nacimbusa* is usually an elderly woman who has proved herself to be a successful midwife. The same terms are used for both roles. She is commonly, though not by means always, a member of the royal clan, and there is a tendency for the office to be hereditary. A *nacimbusa* will teach the secrets of the chisungu to her brother's daughter, to whom she owes special obligations, and from whom she can demand service, and she may also teach them to her own daughter. But mere heredity is not enough. A young woman must build up a reputation sufficient to win the confidence of parents so that they will call her in to 'dance their daughters' for them. To do this she must show assiduity in attending local ceremonies and attach herself as a special helper to the *nacimbusa*. She must show capacity and personality, and make a name for herself as a successful midwife. I heard from one old woman that a form of initiation of young *banacimbusa* took place in the old days, and that they were rubbed with medicine and paid an initiation fee, but this account was not substantiated.

The *banacimbusa* are treated with great consideration by other women in the community. In the old days they were allowed to wear a feather head-dress (*ngala*), which was reserved for certain chiefs and hereditary counsellors. They were given respect at a chief's court and have to report the carrying out of each chisungu ceremony to the chief. I am not sure whether this is still done at

[1] The plural prefix for nouns describing persons is 'ba'. Hence *banacimbusa*, or *banacisungu*.

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881 554 463 793 present, but *banacimbusa* are rather wealthier than their fellows owing to the payments they receive, and they carry themselves with considerable dignity and circumstance.

[608] The *nacimbusa* stands in a special relationship to the girl she has initiated throughout her life. She will probably deliver the girl's first child and act as *mbosua*, or special guardian, to the baby.

881 202 576 *The messenger.* In the old days when the exchange of feasts formed a more important part of the ceremony than they do now, the *nacimbusa* was assisted by a woman known as the *nakalamba*, who was employed to invite the guests to the ceremony by rolling on the ground in front of their houses—the Bemba form of obeisance to a chief. They also fetched clay for the pottery and supervised the ritual cooking of the food.

881 584 *The candidates and their bridegrooms.* The initiation candidate is known as the *nacisungu*. As I have said, these girls were usually betrothed before the ceremony, but it was possible to carry out rites in the case of a girl who was not yet affianced. The bridegroom of a betrothed girl takes part in certain of the ceremonies under the title of *shibwinga*, and this term is also extended to the sister or cross-cousin who may replace him in certain parts of the ceremony.

881 593 604 *The relatives.* Other relatives include the girl's parents and her father's sister. The girl's mother is responsible for providing food and beer, and her father's sister is believed to have a special influence over the fertility of her paternal niece and to stand in a special relationship to her. But the ring of relatives is comparatively small. The uxorilocal family is the chief unit involved.

881 533 *The character of the rite.* The chisungu is a popular ceremony involving much dancing and singing. There is a special drum-beat characteristic of chisungu ceremonies which is frequently used at ordinary beer feasts and always used throughout the rite. Drums are beaten inside the initiation hut, and on the dancing space outside, but they are also carried wherever the women go, some miles out into the bush and back again. The singing is accompanied, as always among the Bemba, by the beat of the drums and by the clapping of hands. Some songs are peculiar to the ceremony and are necessary parts of the rite, but some can be sung at other times. All the chisungu dances are of a characteristic type. They

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Government messengers' quarters, and some stores. The big Church of Scotland mission of Lubwa, with its teachers' training school, lay a few miles away. It was therefore a matter of some surprise to me to hear that the ceremony was to be carried out in a village so much in contact with European civilization. The reason was, I think, that the mistress of the ceremonies (*nacimbusa*), Nangoshye, was a sister of the head Government messenger and living under his protection. She was a woman of some position in the neighbourhood and reckoned herself as of royal rank although she was only a member of a junior branch of the royal clan. She had an unusual personality, great organizing power, and a sharp tongue that sent her fellows scampering to carry out her commands. She was extremely anxious to keep alive the days of her past glory and to teach and interest the girls of the neighbourhood. I estimated her age as between 50 and 60, and she had an unusually good memory. She was well known to me as she had travelled with me through the neighbourhood for a period of at least four months, and had been one of my chief informants. She was anxious that I should see a ceremony correctly carried out, and the fact that one of her paternal nieces was due to be initiated gave her a suitable opportunity to arrange this. It was also a time of great food shortage, and she realized that it would have been difficult to get sufficient beer for the ceremony unless I had been able to procure the necessary millet for her.

I think the chisungu ceremony would have been performed for this particular girl, and a companion from a neighbouring village, if I had not been there, but it would probably have taken place at a later date and on a smaller scale and possibly the scene would have been shifted to a more remote village. It is certainly true that my presence attracted more women from the surrounding village than would otherwise have attended and that an effort was made to carry out the rites as nearly according to tradition as possible. The younger women spoke of the ceremony as an unusually important one for the neighbourhood, chiefly, I think, owing to their admiration and respect for Nangoshye. The rites were, therefore, more elaborate than were usual in that area in 1931 but much less long and complex than would have been the case in pre-European days. The whole ceremony was complete in just

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Nangoshye has modelled the crocodile ready for firing
(See pp. 102, 203)

[facing p. 64]

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The Interpretation of the Ceremony

X 881 (c) *The chisungu as a rite of status change.* Uninitiated women are referred to contemptuously in Bemba society. Is there any evidence that the rites are definitely considered as a means of admitting the chisungu candidates to a new social group such as an age grade?

The ceremonies have many of the elements common to puberty ritual which is said definitely to mark the entry of a boy or girl to a new group—such as occurs, for instance, when the Sotho adolescent of either sex becomes an initiation candidate, and then a grown-up person.

As in these other ceremonies esoteric knowledge is revealed in return for payment by the candidates or their relatives in terms of endurance of suffering or discomfort—a payment in kind. The Bemba parents pay the *nacimbusa* and give her food. The girls are teased and troubled.

But here the similarities end. There is no evidence that even in former days girls who had been 'danced' were clearly distinguished in terms of clothing or ornaments from those who had not. The great *banacimbusa* wore plumed head-dresses and leopard skins but these were tributes to their individual eminence apparently, and not to any stage in their passage through a series of age grades. Linguistically, too, there is no distinct terminology describing a formal age grade. The term *mukashyana* is used for a young girl just before marriage and just after, and as we saw, the occupations of the two are very similar. Marriage does not bring an independent status in any sense of the word. Such terms as *citongo* and *cipele* are used now, at any rate, rather as terms of abuse slung about in the heat of a village quarrel than as a description of social categories. They imply a change of state from the unmarriageable to the marriageable rather than membership of a new group. They indicate possession of or absence of knowledge of marital behaviour and social etiquette. The chisungu confers the right to bear a child, but not to join an age set.

X 881 ● 793 555 Nevertheless the girl does acquire new relationships through her chisungu and submits herself to new authorities. It goes without saying that she is in a somewhat different position with regard to her affinal relatives since the ceremony is the first of a series of rites which mark the gradual consolidation of the marriage rela-

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tionship.[1] But the girl also assumes a position in an informal group composed of the women of the neighbourhood. The chisungu candidate of one year works the following year for the same *nacimbusa* and joins the ranks of her young helpers. The mistress of the ceremony is often the girl's father's sister, so that the head of this loosely organized cult group is also the senior woman of the patrikin. All *banacimbusa* of a district are arranged in order of age, descent and reputation, although their position is now only recognized in terms of respect and formal salutations. Associated with these women leaders of the society are younger married women of intelligence and personality, who are beginning to practise as midwives, as well as those initiated some years previously. Girls just initiated are under an obligation to help their own *nacimbusa* for one or two subsequent ceremonies, but they need not advance any further up the ladder of fame unless they want to do so. The chisungu gives them entry to the company of the leading women in the neighbourhood and makes it possible for them to rise gradually in the hierarchy of potential *nacimbusa*, although it is not compulsory for them to do so.

Within this loose neighbourhood group the older women are honoured, not as a group of equals, but, in line with Bemba ideals, as a number of persons arranged in an exact order of precedence. This hierarchy of age and fame is constantly expressed in the ceremony. 'The arm-pit is not higher than the shoulder' is the song which the company sings over and over again.[2] The chief *nacimbusa* appears in her plumed head-dress. The *mbusa* are offered again and again in order of rank precedence to the older women present. They are offered kneeling, and rolling on the back as to a chief. Dances are given 'for respect'. In fact more rites express the hierarchy of rank than any other form of symbolic behaviour in the chisungu.

It is perhaps worth noting that a hierarchy of closely related women is a much more common occurrence in a matrilineal tribe

[1] See page 44 which describes the chain of events which begins with the betrothal presents, and continues with the giving of food to the son-in-law, the first puberty rite, the chisungu, the marriage itself, and then the entering-in of the son-in-law some years later.

[2] I.e. the arm-pit was created to be beneath the shoulder, and this order can never be reversed.

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with uxorilocal residence than in a patrilineal one with patrilocal residence. The pivoted relationships of a Bemba village are those based on the woman and not on the man, as we have explained.

The position of the senior women in the chisungu also reflects their activities in everyday life. The *nacimbusa* is the midwife. She attends the childbed of the girls she has 'danced'. She provides the magic which will enable them to come safely through the ordeal. She divines to find out which ancestral spirit is being born. She listens to confessions of adultery, which are often forced, if there is delay or difficulty in the birth of the baby. It depends on her to conceal or tell to the in-laws of any real or supposed bad behaviour of the girl, or any ill-omened birth. Did the girl cry out in her pains? Did she relax her efforts and 'kill' the child by collapsing from the exhausting squatting position, thought necessary during childbirth, to the floor while the child's head was about to appear? Was the baby born feet foremost? All these facts can be revealed or concealed by the *nacimbusa*.

The mistress of the ceremonies often becomes the protector (*mbosua*), or, as we might say, the god-mother of the child. In the old days she gave permission for the resumption of sex relations between husband and wife after the birth and gave advice on the many magic precautions that were needed to protect the young child. She had the right to intervene and correct. Thus the girl child delivered and guarded by the *nacimbusa* was watched by her during her growth to womanhood. She confessed her peccadilloes to the same woman at her chisungu; received admonition in her final congratulation ceremony, and remained in close relation with the *nacimbusa* and her helpers throughout her married life. It is, I think, significant that the mothers sing about giving over their girls to the *nacimbusa*. The mother is tender and indulgent, but the *nacimbusa* corrects. The mother and daughter cannot easily talk of sex matters together, but the grandmother, probably also herself a *nacimbusa*, or some non-related midwife is not limited in this way.

It is because the girl has been 'danced' and is magically changed; because she has been 'taught' and has assumed a position in a hierarchy of women and has the protection of the *nacimbusa* of her district that she is no longer a weed, a piece of rubbish or an unfired pot.

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The Interpretation of the Ceremony

husband and wife very exactly, but a marriage ceremony evokes patterns of desirable conduct and stirs up familiar and approved attitudes which cannot be exactly described. Such emotional attitudes may be as essential to the maintenance of the institution of marriage as the legally attested contract, and it is doubtful whether they can be expressed or transferred to people of different temperaments and circumstances so well by means other than symbolism. Compare for instance in our society the efficacy, as a social mechanism, of the marriage contract, and of a marriage ceremony. The first must surely be specific to be effective. It must apply exactly, or more or less exactly to the marriage of a particular couple. The contract must be framed in words which cannot possibly be misunderstood. Exactitude is so important that experts in marriage law and legal terminology are paid to draw up the terms of the agreement. The ritual, on the other hand, owes its virtue to the fact that it conveys fundamental and common attitudes, while it allows for a penumbra of individual interpretations and sentiments which may become just as firmly attached to the same set of symbols. It does not particularly matter how many meanings and shades of meaning a particular mime or emblem has, although it is necessary that a certain body of common attitudes should be conveyed to the young couple and their relatives and these should be associated easily with the symbolic emblems. A chisungu design or a song may vary from year to year, but it is important that the performers should believe that the dance, or song, or design, is the same as it always was.

881 I have, so far, stressed the pragmatic effects of the chisungu on
793 the Bemba individual. It also has a number of effects on tribal institutions and structure, and some of these have been described. As a ritual device this puberty ceremonial can be considered as a mechanism of the cult group type. Complex symbolism does not survive, in a society without written literature, unless an individual or a social group is responsible for keeping it alive and handing it on. Such individuals acquire authority and are able to exercise discipline in the sphere with which the rite is associated.[1]

[1] Malinowski's routine method of analysing a rite was to sort the data under the following headings: ritual behaviour, dogma, ethical rules, charters (which he assumed, incorrectly, generally to be myths), and personnel.

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Pragmatic Effects

In Lubemba the chisungu puts power into the hands of the *nacimbusa*, who is an authority outside the girl's own family although in some cases she is the sister of the girl's father. She is not a member of the bride's own matrilineage. A mother cannot 'dance' her own daughter even though she is a *nacimbusa* of repute, in this initiation ceremony which enforces the rules of marriage and maternity.

The ritual mechanisms used in the chisungu may be further elucidated by continued comparison of this cycle of rites with the chiefly ceremonies already referred to. The difference between the two is striking. It is not only that the ancestral ceremonies consist of prayers while the chisungu consists of meticulously performed magic rites, and mimes, but that the personnel of the two ceremonies is selected in quite dissimilar ways. Those who approach ancestors—the chiefs, priests and headmen—do so by virtue of descent. The ritual is handed on by hereditary succession in the case of headmen, who use quite simple prayers to the ancestors. In the case of big chiefs, who are the focus of very complex ritual, the ceremonies are in the hands of ritual specialists, also chosen on the basis of descent (*bakabilo*). Thus the long rites for the burial of a Citimukulu, the installation of his successor and the building of his new village are controlled by hereditary buriers and keepers of the king's shrines, or by clan authorities with special ritual functions at the court. The chisungu is mainly carried out by commoners with no special relation to the chief and his court, although its occurrence will be reported to the ruler, as is any other important event in his territory. The *banacimbusa* are individuals who have won their way to their position instead of inheriting it. The officiants at the nubility rites are selected on the basis of age, personality and, to a certain extent, location, rather than of lineage, clan or descent from a royal line.

There is a marked difference too in the way the rites are performed. The headman tends to pray to his ancestors at dawn or dusk when the village is quiet and no one is passing to and fro. It does not matter whether other worshippers are present. The rites of great chiefs are secret and no unauthorized people can be present when the Citimukulu prays before his relic shrine. Death used to be the penalty for the man who entered a shrine without due permission.

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ceremony and are buried according to particular rites. They are divided into groups according to the order of their ancestors arrival in the country, and each has a special office based on the privileges of his original ancestor, e.g. the care of the royal drum, the right to sit on a stool in the chief's presence, or the duty to call him in the morning by clapping outside his door.

The main duties of the *bakabilo* in native eyes are ritual, as has been described. They are in charge of the ceremonies at the sacred relic shrines and take possession of the *babenye* when the chief dies. They alone can purify the chief from the defilement of sex intercourse so that he is able to enter his relic shrine and perform the necessary rites there. They are in complete charge of the accession ceremonies of the paramount and the bigger territorial chiefs, and some of their number are described as *bafingo*, or hereditary buriers of the chief. Besides this, each individual *mukabilo* has his own small ritual duty or privilege, such as lighting the sacred fire, or forging the blade of the hoe that is to dig the foundations of the new capital.

Besides their priestly duties, the *bakabilo* acted as regents at the death or absence of the chief, and any question of succession or other matter of tribal importance is placed before the *bakabilo*, and the big ceremonies I witnessed at the chief's capital were all made occasions of such discussions. The procedure is complex, but an effective method of deliberation. The paramount sends two special hereditary messengers, also *bakabilo*, to place the matter before the council. The senior members speak and if a difficulty arises they refer the matter to the head priest of the land, the Cimba, who sits apart with his own following, and gives decisions on matters of tribal precedent or suggests rewording decisions to be carried to the chief. Some of the discussion is carried on in archaic *cibemba*.

The importance of the *bakabilo's* council is the check it holds over the paramount's power. These are hereditary officials and therefore cannot be removed at will. Two or three of the *bakabilo* have been chased out of the country in the past for overweening pride, according to tradition, and the Cimba was removed from office in 1934, but only after the tribe had suffered for many years from the results of a species of megalomania to which he seemed to be subject. Otherwise the *bakabilo* are immune from the chief's anger and exert a salutary influence over him by refusing

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with a derisive imitation of the slow ungainly walk of the crocodile and compares its gait with the speed of the fish. At the court of the Paramount Chief this type of joking relationship has been formalized, and the head of the fish clan, a *wakubilo*, or hereditary priest of the tribal ancestral spirits, must dramatize the joking antagonism between the two clans by appearing in special regalia each time he visits the chief, and threatening him with a broad-bladed fishing spear. On such occasions the Paramount is protected by the head of the dog clan, who has to dance in front of him, pretending to bark in defence of his master. The surrounding courtiers shout the praise names of the fish clan, and encourage the actors. Such a ceremony may be enacted some four or five times during one week during a session of the tribal council. It is never omitted, although performed with diminishing gusto as the week proceeds, and sometimes under modern conditions as a preface to some matter-of-fact discussion of tribal business under the Native Courts Ordinance.

FIG. 1. THE FISH CLAN MEMBER IN REGALIA THREATENING TO SPEAR THE CHIEF, WHO IS SEATED AT THE TOP OF THE MOUND PROTECTED BY THE DOG CLAN MEMBER (STANDING).

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In spite of the joking hostility, *banungwe* behave to each other with special ease and freedom.[9] They can demand privileges of each other and take each other's possessions. They can swear at each other obscenely (*kutuka nseli*), a form of injury for which the sufferer can claim legal redress as an ordinary rule. It is said that even a commoner may swear at his chief in this

[9] My native clerk, asked to type out some notes on *banungwe*, translated the term as 'totem friends.'